Claim Amendments

Please amend the claims as set forth below. This listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in this application.

1-23. (Previously canceled)

24-27. (Cancel)

28. (Currently Amended) A computer operated by a user for retrieving information over a network, where the computer is programmed to carry out the operations of:

monitoring input from the user operating the computer;

retrieving a plurality of web pages over the network at the direction of the user, where the plurality of web pages are retrieved over the network and displayed in a web browser window on a display screen associated with the computer, and where the web browser window is associated with a web browser application that is operated by the user;

retrieving a first web page over the network from a first web server at the direction of the user, where the first web page is published by a first entity;

displaying the first web page on the display screen associated with the computer;

monitoring the display of the first web page on the display screen associated with the computer, where the operation of monitoring the display of the first web page is carried out by a user activity monitoring program that is separate from the web browser application and that automatically monitors the display of the first web page as the user operates the web browser application,

where the user activity monitoring program obtains user activity data associated with the first web page identifying the user as having an interest in information published by the first entity, and

where the user activity monitoring program obtains the user activity data associated with the first web page without involvement or assistance from the first entity that publishes the first web page;

upon monitoring the display of the first web page, automatically <u>enabling the identification of</u> <s>identifying</s> a first advertising message to communicate to the user<u>, where the first advertising message is identified based on the user activity data associated with the first web page identifying the user as having an interest in information published by the first entity</u>; and

communicating the first advertising message to the user, where the first advertising message is communicated to the user by automatically placing the first advertising message in an advertisement area on the display screen so that at least a portion of the first advertising message is visible to the user,

where the first advertising message is independent of the first web page and is not part of the first web page<u>, and is not embedded within</u> <s>as published by</s> the first <u>web page</u> <s>entity</s>, and

where the first advertising message includes information that a competitive entity wishes to communicate to users viewing web pages published by marketplace competitors of the competitive entity, and where the first entity and the competitive entity are marketplace competitors.

29. (Cancel)

30. (Currently Amended) The computer of claim <u>28</u> [[29]], where the <u>computer is further programmed to carry out</u> <s>operation of displaying a web page associated with the competitive entity includes</s> the operation of:

displaying a web page associated with the competitive entity in the advertisement area on the display screen <u>upon detecting that the user has selected the first advertising message</u>.

31. (Currently Amended) The computer of claim <u>28</u> [[29]], where the <u>computer is further programmed to carry out</u> <s>operation of displaying a web page associated with the competitive entity includes</s> the operation of:

displaying a web page associated with the competitive entity in a new window on the display screen <u>upon detecting that the user has selected the first advertising message</u>.

32-34. (Cancel)

35. (Currently Amended) The computer of claim 28, where the operation of communicating the first advertising message to the user includes the operation of:

placing the first <u>advertising</u> message in a new window on the display screen that is separate from the web browser window.

36. (Currently Amended) The computer of claim 28, where the operation of communicating the first advertising message to the user includes the operation of:

displaying the first <u>advertising</u> message within the web browser window.

37. (Currently Amended) The computer of claim 28, where the <u>operation</u> ~~operations~~ of retrieving a first web page over the network <u>includes</u> ~~and displaying the first web page include~~ the operations of:

determining that the first web page is a document that the user may wish to retrieve over the network and display on the display screen, where the first web page is identified by a search engine in response to a search query entered by the user;

retrieving the first web page over the network from the first web server and storing the first web page in local storage associated with the computer, where the first web page is retrieved and stored in the background before the user inputs a request to display the first web page;

detecting that the user has requested that the first web page be displayed; and

upon detecting that the user has requested that the first web page be displayed, ~~displaying the first web page on the display screen by~~ retrieving the first web page from local storage associated with the computer.

38. (Previously Presented) The computer of claim 28, where the computer is further programmed to carry out the operations of:

detecting, while the first advertising message is displayed, that the user wishes to display a different web page on the display screen associated with the computer; and

upon detecting that the user wishes to display a different web page on the display screen, allowing the first advertising message to remain in the advertisement area on the display screen.

39. (Currently Amended) The computer of claim 28, where the operation of communicating the ~~automatically identifying~~ a first advertising message includes the operations of:

sending a request for information over the network to a first network device, where the first network device is different from the first web server, and is not controlled by the first entity;

receiving, in response to sending the request for information over the network to the first network device, information that includes the identity of a second network device;

sending a request to the second network device; and

receiving, in response to sending the request to the second network device, information to be included within the first advertising message.

40. (Cancel)

41. (Previously Presented) The computer of claim 28, where the computer is further programmed to carry out the operations of:

monitoring the display of the plurality of web pages, where the operation of monitoring the display of the plurality of web pages is done primarily for the purpose of presenting targeted advertisements to the user.

42. (Previously Presented) A computer operated by a user for retrieving information over a network, where the computer is programmed to carry out the operations of:

monitoring input from the user operating the computer;

retrieving a plurality of web pages over the network, where the plurality of web pages are retrieved over the network and displayed in a web browser window on a display screen associated with the computer, and where the web browser window is associated with a web browser application that is operated by the user;

determining that a first web page is a document that the user may wish to retrieve over the network and display on the display screen, where the first web page is stored at a first web server and is published by a first entity, and where the first web page is identified by a search engine in response to a search query entered by the user;

retrieving the first web page over the network from the first web server, where the first web page is retrieved before the user inputs a request to display the first web page;

in response to detecting that the user has requested that the first web page be displayed, displaying the first web page on the display screen by retrieving the first web page from local storage associated with the computer; and

communicating a first advertising message to the user, where the first advertising message is communicated to the user by automatically placing the first advertising message in an advertisement area on the display screen so that at least a portion of the first advertising message is visible to the user along with the first web page,

where the first advertising message is not part of the first web page as published by the first entity at the first web server, and is not embedded within the first web page as published by the first entity, and

where the first advertising message is targeted to users viewing information of the type displayed by the first web page.

43. (Cancel)

44. (Currently Amended) The computer of claim 28, where the computer is further programmed to carry out the operations of:

retrieving over the network information used to determine whether an advertisement will be displayed for a web page displayed in the web browser window, where the information is retrieved before it is needed to determine whether an advertisement will be displayed for the web page ~~make any such determination~~; and

storing the information at the computer in local storage.

45-53. (Cancel)

54. (New) A computer operated by a user and connected to a network, where the computer is programmed to be capable of carrying out the operations of:

(a) monitoring input from the user operating the computer;

(b) retrieving a plurality of web pages over the network at the direction of the user operating the computer,

where the operation of retrieving the plurality of web pages over the network is carried out by a web browser application that is executing on the computer and is controlled by the user, and

where the plurality of web pages are displayed consecutively by the web browser application in a web browser window on a display screen associated with the computer;

(c) monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the plurality of web pages,

where the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the plurality of web pages is carried out by a user activity monitoring program that automatically monitors activity of the web browser application that is executing on the computer and is controlled by the user,

where the user activity monitoring program is in a separate code module that executes on the computer and that provides functionality not provided by the web browser application, and

where the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the plurality of web pages is carried out at a variety of web sites without requiring involvement or assistance from any publisher of the plurality of web pages;

(d) retrieving a first web page over the network at the direction of the user operating the computer,

where the first web page is accessible from a web server connected to the network and is published by a first entity, and

where the operation of retrieving the first web page over the network at the direction of the user is carried out by the web browser application after the operation of retrieving the plurality of web pages over the network at the direction of the user;

(e) displaying the first web page in the web browser window on the display screen associated with the computer,

where the operation of displaying the first web page in the web browser window is carried out by the web browser application executing on the computer;

(f) monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the first web page,

where the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the first web page is carried out automatically by the user activity monitoring program,

where the user activity monitoring program obtains user activity data associated with the first web page identifying the user as having an interest in information published by the first entity, and

where the user activity monitoring program obtains the user activity data associated with the first web page without requiring involvement or assistance from the first entity that publishes the first web page; and

(g) presenting to the user an advertising message relevant to the first web page,

where the advertising message is independent of the first web page and is not part of the first web page, and is not embedded within or referred to by the first web page,

where the advertising message is automatically selected to be presented to the user based on the user activity data associated with the first web page identifying the user as

having an interest in information published by the first entity so that the advertising message might appeal to the user's interest in information published by the first entity,

where the advertising message includes a competitive advertising message published by a commercial entity that is different than the first entity, and

where the advertising message is presented to the user by displaying the advertising message within a new display area that appears automatically on the display screen associated with the computer after monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the first web page browsed to by the user using the web browser application.

55. (New) A data storage medium having computer program instructions stored on it, where the computer program instructions are executable on a computer operated by a user and connected to a network, and where the computer program instructions configure the computer to be capable of carrying out the operations of:

(a) monitoring input from the user operating the computer;

(b) retrieving a plurality of web pages over the network at the direction of the user operating the computer,

where the operation of retrieving the plurality of web pages over the network is carried out by a web browser application that is executing on the computer and is controlled by the user, and

where the plurality of web pages are displayed consecutively by the web browser application in a web browser window on a display screen associated with the computer;

(c) monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the plurality of web pages,

where the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the plurality of web pages is carried out by a user activity monitoring program that automatically monitors activity of the web browser application that is executing on the computer and is controlled by the user,

where the user activity monitoring program is in a separate code module that executes on the computer and that provides functionality not provided by the web browser application, and

where the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the plurality of web pages is carried out at a variety of web sites without requiring involvement or assistance from any publisher of the plurality of web pages;

(d) retrieving a first web page over the network at the direction of the user operating the computer,

where the first web page is accessible from a web server connected to the network and is published by a first entity, and

where the operation of retrieving the first web page over the network at the direction of the user is carried out by the web browser application after the operation of retrieving the plurality of web pages over the network at the direction of the user;

(e) displaying the first web page in the web browser window on the display screen associated with the computer,

where the operation of displaying the first web page in the web browser window is carried out by the web browser application executing on the computer;

(f) monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the first web page,

where the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the first web page is carried out automatically by the user activity monitoring program,

where the user activity monitoring program obtains user activity data associated with the first web page identifying the user as having an interest in information published by the first entity, and

where the user activity monitoring program obtains the user activity data associated with the first web page without requiring involvement or assistance from the first entity that publishes the first web page; and

(g) presenting to the user an advertising message relevant to the first web page,

where the advertising message is independent of the first web page and is not part of the first web page, and is not embedded within or referred to by the first web page,

where the advertising message is automatically selected to be presented to the user based on the user activity data associated with the first web page identifying the user as having an interest in information published by the first entity so that the advertising message might appeal to the user's interest in information published by the first entity,

where the advertising message includes a competitive advertising message published by a commercial entity that is different than the first entity, and

where the advertising message is presented to the user by displaying the advertising message within the web browser window in a later web page browsed to by the user from within the web browser application after monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the first web page browsed to by the user using the web browser application.

56. (New) A system comprising a computer operated by a user and connected to a network, where the system is configured to be capable of carrying out the operations of:

(a) monitoring input from the user operating the computer;

(b) retrieving a plurality of web pages over the network at the direction of the user operating the computer,

where the operation of retrieving the plurality of web pages over the network is carried out so that the plurality of web pages are retrieved sequentially by a web browser application that is executing on the computer and is controlled by the user, and

where the plurality of web pages are displayed by the web browser application in a web browser window on a display screen associated with the computer;

(c) monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the plurality of web pages,

where the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the plurality of web pages is carried out by user activity monitoring instructions that are computer program instructions that execute on the computer to automatically monitor activity of the web browser application controlled by the user,

where the user activity monitoring instructions are in a separate code module and provide functionality in addition to that provided by the web browser application, and

where the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the plurality of web pages is carried out so that user activity associated with the plurality of web pages can be observed without requiring involvement or assistance from publishers of the plurality of web pages;

(d) retrieving a first web page over the network at the direction of the user operating the computer,

where the first web page is published by a first entity and is accessible on the network at a web server controlled by the first entity, and

where the operation of retrieving the first web page over the network at the direction of the user is carried out by the web browser application after the operation of retrieving the plurality of web pages over the network at the direction of the user;

(e) displaying the first web page in the web browser window on the display screen associated with the computer,

where the operation of displaying the first web page in the web browser window is carried out by the web browser application executing on the computer;

(f) monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the first web page,

where the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the first web page is carried out automatically by the user activity monitoring instructions, and

where the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the first web page is carried out so that user activity associated with the first web page can be observed without requiring involvement or assistance from the first entity that publishes the first web page;

(g) retrieving a second web page over the network at the direction of the user operating the computer,

where the second web page is published by a second entity and is accessible on the network at a web server controlled by the second entity, and

where the operation of retrieving the second web page over the network at the direction of the user is carried out by the web browser application after the operation of retrieving the first web page over the network at the direction of the user;

(h) displaying the second web page in the web browser window on the display screen associated with the computer,

where the operation of displaying the second web page in the web browser window is carried out by the web browser application executing on the computer, and

where the second web page is displayed in the web browser window without having communicated to the user information based on the observed user activity associated with the first web page;

(i) monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the second web page,

where the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the second web page is carried out automatically by the user activity monitoring instructions,

where the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the second web page is carried out so that user activity associated with the second web page can be observed without requiring involvement or assistance from the second entity that publishes the second web page, and

where the observed user activity associated with the second web page suggests that the user has an interest in information of the kind published in the second web page; and

(j) communicating to the user a commercial message relevant to the second web page,

where the commercial message relevant to the second web page is independent of the second web page so that it is not included or embedded within the second web page, and is not referred to by the second web page,

where the commercial message is communicated to the user based automatically on the observed user activity associated with the second web page suggesting that the user has an interest in information of the kind published in the second web page so that it may

appeal to the user's interest, suggested by the observed user activity associated with the second web page, in information of the kind published in the second web page,

where the commercial message is published by a commercial entity that is different from the first entity and the second entity, and

where the commercial message is communicated to the user by placing the commercial message on the display screen associated with the computer so that the commercial message becomes visible to the user operating the computer.

57. (New) The system of claim 56, where the operation of communicating to the user a commercial message relevant to the second web page includes the operations of:

determining whether a commercial message should be communicated to the user by using data stored locally at the computer, where the data is stored locally at the computer prior to the operation of retrieving the second web page and in anticipation of determining whether a commercial message should be communicated to the user, and

displaying the commercial message in an area on the display screen that automatically appears after the operation of determining whether a commercial message should be displayed.

58. (New) The system of claim 57, where the system is further configured to be capable of carrying out the operation of:

determining, using the data stored locally at the computer, that a commercial message will not be displayed for the first web page upon the display of the first web page, where the data is stored locally at the computer prior to the operation of retrieving the first web page.

59. (New) The system of claim 56, where the operation of communicating to the user a commercial message relevant to the second web page includes the operation of:

determining that a commercial message relevant to the second web page should be communicated to the user by using only information stored locally at the computer.

60. (New) The system of claim 56, where the system is further configured to be capable of carrying out the operations of:

transferring a first set of data over the network to the computer from a server, where the first set of data is used to determine whether to communicate to the user a commercial message, and where the first set of data is transferred over the network prior to the operation of retrieving the first web page; and

transferring a second set of data over the network to the computer from the server, where the second set of data is used to determine whether to communicate to the user a commercial message relevant to the second web page, and where the second set of data is transferred over the network after the operation of retrieving the first web page but prior to the operation of retrieving the second web page.

61. (New) The system of claim 56, where the commercial message relevant to the second web page is communicated to the user by automatically displaying the commercial message in an area on the display screen that appears upon the display of the second web page, and where the commercial message includes comparison pricing information relevant to the second web page from a plurality of merchants.

62. (New) The system of claim 56, where the commercial message relevant to the second web page is communicated to the user by displaying the commercial message in an area on the display screen that appears automatically upon the display of the second web page, and where the commercial message alerts the user to competitive pricing information that may be available for an item in the second web page.

63. (New) The system of claim 56, where the operation of communicating to the user a commercial message relevant to the second web page includes the operation of:

communicating the commercial message by displaying the commercial message in a secondary area within the web browser window that appears automatically upon the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the second web page, where the secondary area is integrated into the web browser window so

that it is part of the web browser window but is separated from a primary area within the web browser window in which the second web page is displayed.

64. (New) The system of claim 63, where the commercial message indicates that price comparison information relevant to the second web page may be available, and where price comparison information relevant to the second web page is displayed upon detecting that the user has interacted with the secondary area.

65. (New) The system of claim 63, where the commercial message includes price comparison information relevant to an item for sale in the second web page.

66. (New) The system of claim 56, where the operation of communicating to the user a commercial message relevant to the second web page includes the operation of:

communicating the commercial message by automatically displaying the commercial message in a secondary area within the web browser window upon the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the second web page, where the secondary area is integrated into the web browser window so that it is part of the web browser window but is separate from a main web browser area within the web browser window in which the second web page is displayed, and where the commercial message includes a commercial message associated with an entity in a business similar to the second entity.

67. (New) The system of claim 63 or 66, where the user activity monitoring instructions interface with the web browser application in a manner that causes a menu item to be added to the web browser application that can be used to control an aspect of the secondary area.

68. (New) The system of claim 63 or 66, where the user activity monitoring instructions interface with the web browser application so that a menu item is added to the web browser application that can be used to control an aspect of the secondary area,

and so that the secondary area can be closed by selection of a button displayed within the web browser window.

69. (New) The system of claim 56, where the operation of displaying the second web page in the web browser window on the display screen associated with the computer includes the operation of:

replacing the first web page in the web browser window with the second web page so that the second web page and the first web page are displayed consecutively in the web browser window.

70. (New) The system of claim 56, where the commercial message is communicated to the user further based on the rate paid by an entity associated with the commercial message.

71. (New) The system of claim 56, where the user activity monitoring instructions are created by a first publisher, and are distributed without charge to users of a second publisher under an agreement with the first publisher.

72. (New) The system of claim 56, where the commercial message is communicated to the user by automatically displaying the commercial message in a web page within a new window that appears on the display screen upon monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the second web page, and where the commercial message includes a competitive commercial message relevant to the second web page.

73. (New) The system of claim 56, where the commercial message is communicated to the user by displaying the commercial message in an area on the display screen that automatically appears after the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the second web page, and where the commercial

message includes information from a commercial entity in a business similar to that of the second entity.

74. (New) The system of claim 56, where the commercial message is communicated to the user by displaying the commercial message in an area on the display screen that automatically appears after the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the second web page, and where the commercial message alerts the user to competitive prices that may be available for an item in the second web page.

75. (New) The system of claim 56, where the commercial message is communicated to the user by displaying the commercial message automatically in a visible area on the display screen upon monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the second web page, and where the commercial message includes a competitive commercial message relevant to the second web page.

76. (New) The system of claim 56, where the commercial message is communicated to the user by displaying the commercial message automatically in a visible area on the display screen upon monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the second web page, and where the commercial message informs the user of comparison pricing information that may be available for an item in the second web page.

77. (New) The system of claim 56, where the commercial message relevant to the second web page is communicated to the user by displaying the commercial message in an area on the display screen that appears automatically after the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the second web page.

78. (New) The system of claim 56, where the system is further configured to be capable of carrying out the operations of:

upon monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the second web page, and prior to communicating to the user a commercial message relevant to the second web page, providing a visual indication that a commercial message relevant to the second web page may be available; and

detecting that the user has requested that the commercial message be displayed, where the operation of communicating to the user the commercial message relevant to the second web page is carried out in response to the operation of detecting that the user has requested that the commercial message be displayed.

79. (New) The system of claim 77, where the system is further configured to be capable of carrying out the operation of:

prior to communicating to the user a commercial message relevant to the second web page, providing a visual indication to the user that a message will likely be displayed shortly.

80. (New) The system of claim 77, where the first web page is displayed without displaying any additional window on the display screen in which information based on the observed user activity associated with the first web page can be displayed.

81. (New) The system of claim 77, where the operation of communicating to the user a commercial message relevant to the second web page includes the operation of:

communicating to the user a commercial message in a window having a size that is substantially equal to a desktop area on the display screen associated with the computer.

82. (New) The system of claim 77, where the operation of communicating to the user a commercial message relevant to the second web page includes the operation of:

choosing to communicate a commercial message relevant to the second web page rather than relevant to another web page in an inactive window that is also on the display screen.

83. (New) The system of claim 77, where the operation of communicating to the user a commercial message relevant to the second web page includes the operation of:

communicating the commercial message in a window that is initially located on the display screen under another window.

84. (New) The system of claim 56 or 77,

where the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the first web page includes the operation of transferring information relating to the first web page over the network from the computer to a server that is different than the web server controlled by the first entity,

where the operation of monitoring activity of the web browser application associated with the second web page includes the operation of transferring information relating to the second web page over the network from the computer to the server, where the server is different than the web server controlled by the second entity, and

where the information relating to the first web page and the information relating to the second web page are transferred to the server as part of an attempt to communicate to the user a relevant commercial message.

85. (New) The system of claim 56 or 77, where the system is further configured to be capable of carrying out the operation of:

prior to the operation of communicating to the user a commercial message relevant to the second web page, determining that the user is visiting a heavily promoted web site, and where the commercial message is communicated to the user further based on the determination that the user is visiting the heavily promoted web site.

86. (New) The system of claim 56 or 77, where the system is further configured to be capable of carrying out the operation of:

prior to the operation of communicating to the user a commercial message relevant to the second web page, determining that the user may be shopping for a particular product or service.

87. (New) The system of claim 56 or 77, where the user activity monitoring instructions are downloaded over the network, tested for authenticity using a code signing procedure, and installed on the computer using a persistent storage mechanism.

88. (New) The system of claim 56 or 77, where the computer places security restrictions on computer programs downloaded from the network, but where the user activity monitoring instructions are installed at the computer so that they can execute on the computer without being subject to the security restrictions.

89. (New) The system of claim 56 or 77, where the second web page is dynamically generated by the second entity.

90. (New) The system of claim 56 or 77, where the second web page is retrieved over the network upon detecting that the user has moved a pointing device cursor over a display element corresponding to a link to the second web page, and where the second web page is retrieved before detecting that the user has selected the link to the second web page.

91. (New) The system of claim 56 or 77, where the user activity monitoring instructions monitor activity of the web browser application through an ActiveX interface.

92. (New) The system of claim 56, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, or 77, where the commercial message relevant to the second web page is selected from among multiple commercial messages, and where the commercial message relevant to the second web

page is selected based in part on the rate paid by an entity associated with the commercial message.

93. (New) The system of claim 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, or 78, where the system is further configured to be capable of carrying out the operation of:

retrieving data over the network to the computer prior to the operation of retrieving the second web page over the network, where the data can be used to determine whether to communicate to the user a commercial message relevant to the second web page, and where the data is retrieved in anticipation of determining at the computer whether to communicate to the user a commercial message.

94. (New) The system of claim 73, 74, 75, 76, or 77, where the area on the display screen in which the commercial message is displayed is integrated into the web browser window so that it is part of the web browser window but is separated from a main web browser area in which the second web page is displayed.

95. (New) The system of claim 73, 74, 75, 76, or 77, where the area on the display screen in which the commercial message is displayed is located in a taskbar area of the display screen.

96. (New) The system of claim 63, 66, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, or 78, where the system is further configured to be capable of carrying out the operations of:

monitoring the user's selection of a link associated with the commercial message while the second web page is displayed in the web browser window;

upon determining that the user has selected the link, replacing the second web page in the web browser window with a new web page, where the user activity monitoring instructions command the web browser application to display the new web page in the web browser window through an ActiveX interface with the web browser application.

97. (New) The system of claim 57, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, or 78, where the system is further configured to be capable of carrying out the operations of:

retrieving a third web page over the network at the direction of the user operating the computer, where the third web page is published by a third entity and is accessible on the network at a web server controlled by the third entity, and where the operation of retrieving the third web page over the network is carried out by the web browser application after the operation of communicating to the user the commercial message relevant to the second web page; and

displaying the third web page in the web browser window on the display screen associated with the computer by replacing the second web page displayed in the web browser window but continuing to communicate to the user the commercial message relevant to the second web page.

98. (New) A method in a communication system that includes a client computer operated by a user and connected to a network, a first web server that is connected to the network, and a second web server that is connected to the network, where the method comprises the acts of:

(a) monitoring input from the user operating the client computer;

(b) transferring a plurality of web pages over the network consecutively to the client computer at the direction of the user operating the client computer,

where the plurality of web pages are transferred over the network at the request of a web browser application that is executing on the client computer and that is controlled by the user, and

where the plurality of web pages are displayed by the web browser application in a web browser window on a display screen associated with the client computer;

(c) monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the plurality of web pages that are being transferred over the network consecutively to the client computer at the direction of the user operating the client computer,

where the operation of monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the plurality of web pages is performed automatically by a network activity monitoring program monitoring the user's use of the network,

where the network activity monitoring program is separate from the web browser application and provides functionality in addition to that provided by the web browser application, and

where the operation of monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the plurality of web pages is performed independently of each of the plurality of web pages in a manner that enables user activity to be monitored by the network activity monitoring program at a wide variety of unrelated web pages without requiring assistance from publishers of the wide variety of unrelated web pages;

(d) transferring a first web page over the network to the client computer,

where the first web page is published by a first entity and is accessible on the network at the first web server which is controlled by the first entity, and

where the operation of transferring the first web page over the network to the client computer is performed at the request of the web browser application at the direction of the user after the operation of transferring the plurality of web pages over the network consecutively to the client computer at the direction of the user;

(e) displaying the first web page in the web browser window on the display screen associated with the client computer,

where the operation of displaying the first web page in the web browser window is performed by the web browser application executing on the client computer;

(f) monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the first web page,

where the operation of monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the first web page is performed automatically by the network activity monitoring program monitoring the user's use of the network, and

where the operation of monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the first web page is performed independently of the first web page in a manner that enables user activity data associated with the first web page to be obtained without requiring assistance from the first entity that publishes the first web page;

(g) transferring a second web page over the network to the client computer,

where the second web page is published by a second entity and is accessible on the network at the second web server which is controlled by the second entity, and

where the operation of transferring the second web page over the network to the client computer is performed at the request of the web browser application at the direction of the user after the operation of transferring the first web page over the network to the client computer;

(h) displaying the second web page in the web browser window on the display screen associated with the client computer,

where the operation of displaying the second web page in the web browser window is performed by the web browser application executing on the client computer, and

where the second web page is displayed in the web browser window without having communicated to the user content based on the user activity data associated with the first web page obtained in the operation of monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the first web page;

(i) monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the second web page,

where the operation of monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the second web page is performed automatically by the network activity monitoring program monitoring the user's use of the network,

where the operation of monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the second web page is performed independently of the second web page in a manner that enables user activity data associated with the second web page to be obtained without requiring assistance or involvement from the second entity that publishes the second web page, and

where the user activity data associated with the second web page can be used to identify the user as having an interest in information of the type published in the second web page;

(j) after monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the second web page, communicating to the user commercial content relevant to the second web page,

where the commercial content relevant to the second web page is independent of the second web page and not part of the second web page, and is not embedded within or referred to by the second web page,

where the commercial content relevant to the second web page is automatically chosen to appeal to the user based on the user activity data associated with the second web page that can be used to identify the user as having an interest in information of the type published in the second web page,

where the commercial content relevant to the second web page is communicated to the user by including the commercial content within a third web page browsed to by the user from within the web browser window displayed on the display screen associated with the client computer, and

where the commercial content is from a commercial entity that enables the commercial content to be chosen for the user based on the user activity data associated with the second web page;

(k) monitoring the user's interaction with the commercial content relevant to the second web page;

(l) determining that the user has selected the commercial content relevant to the second web page; and

(m) in response to determining that the user has selected the commercial content relevant to the second web page, displaying additional information on the display screen relating to the commercial content relevant to the second web page.

99. (New) A communication system that includes a client computer operated by a user and connected to a network, a first web server that is connected to the network, and a second web server that is connected to the network, where the communication system is configured to carry out the operations of:

(a) monitoring input from the user operating the client computer;

26.

(b) transferring a plurality of web pages over the network to the client computer sequentially at the direction of the user operating the client computer,

where the plurality of web pages are transferred over the network at the request of a web browser application that is executing on the client computer and that is controlled by the user, and

where the plurality of web pages are displayed by the web browser application in a web browser window on a display screen associated with the client computer;

(c) monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the plurality of web pages that are being transferred over the network to the client computer sequentially at the direction of the user operating the client computer,

where the operation of monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the plurality of web pages is performed automatically by network activity monitoring instructions that are computer program instructions executing on the client computer to monitor the user's use of the network,

where the network activity monitoring instructions are in a separate code module and provide functionality in addition to that provided by the web browser application, and

where the operation of monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the plurality of web pages is performed independently of each of the plurality of web pages in a manner that enables user activity to be monitored by the network activity monitoring instructions at a wide variety of unrelated web sites without assistance from publishers associated with the wide variety of unrelated web sites;

(d) transferring a first web page over the network to the client computer,

where the first web page is published by a first entity and is accessible on the network at the first web server which is controlled by the first entity, and

where the operation of transferring the first web page over the network to the client computer is performed at the request of the web browser application at the direction of the user after the operation of transferring the plurality of web pages over the network to the client computer sequentially at the direction of the user;

(e) displaying the first web page in the web browser window on the display screen associated with the client computer,

where the operation of displaying the first web page in the web browser window is performed by the web browser application executing on the client computer;

(f) monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the first web page,

where the operation of monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the first web page is performed automatically by the network activity monitoring instructions executing on the client computer, and

where the operation of monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the first web page is performed independently of the first web page in a manner that enables user activity data associated with the first web page to be obtained without assistance from the first entity that publishes the first web page;

(g) transferring a second web page over the network to the client computer,

where the second web page is published by a second entity and is accessible on the network at the second web server which is controlled by the second entity, and

where the operation of transferring the second web page over the network to the client computer is performed at the request of the web browser application at the direction of the user after the operation of transferring the first web page over the network to the client computer;

(h) displaying the second web page in the web browser window on the display screen associated with the client computer,

where the operation of displaying the second web page in the web browser window is performed by the web browser application executing on the client computer, and

where the second web page is displayed in the web browser window without communicating to the user content chosen as a function of the user activity data associated with the first web page obtained in the operation of monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the first web page;

(i) monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the second web page,

where the operation of monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the second web page is performed automatically by the network activity monitoring instructions executing on the client computer,

where the operation of monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the second web page is performed independently of the second web page in a manner that enables user activity data associated with the second web page to be obtained without assistance from the second entity that publishes the second web page, and

where the user activity data associated with the second web page can be used to identify the user as having an interest in information of the kind published in the second web page;

(j) after monitoring activity of the client computer associated with the second web page, communicating to the user selectable content relevant to the second web page,

where the selectable content relevant to the second web page is independent of the second web page so that it is not included within the second web page, and is not embedded within or referred to by the second web page,

where the selectable content relevant to the second web page is automatically chosen to be communicated to the user as a function of the user activity data associated with the second web page that can be used to identify the user as having an interest in information of the kind published in the second web page,

where the selectable content relevant to the second web page is communicated to the user by including the selectable content within a later web page browsed to by the user from within a web browser window displayed on the display screen associated with the client computer, and

where the selectable content is published by a commercial entity that enables the selectable content to be chosen for the user as a function of the user activity data associated with the second web page;

(k) monitoring the user's interaction with the selectable content relevant to the second web page;

(l) determining that the user has selected the selectable content relevant to the second web page; and

(m) in response to determining that the user has selected the selectable content relevant to the second web page, displaying additional information on the display screen relating to the selectable content relevant to the second web page.